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FURTHER PROMOTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF THE PROGRAMME AND METHODS OF WORK OF THE COMMISSION:

(a) ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES AND WAYS AND MEANS WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Written statement submitted by the Network of Women's Non-Governmental Organizations in the Islamic Republic of Iran, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[8 April 1998]

GE.98-12665 (E)

1. Nowadays dealing with women's issues is not just paying attention to the problems of a special section of society, but it is rather a considerable issue which influences all the human societies. No doubt that one of the main problems is the increasingly extensive violence against women with its various forms and dimensions. This violence is a basic obstacle in the way of the promotion of women's rights and their presence in social life as well as in the others' life. The violence against women endangers their healthy social and domestic life and prevents each society to profit from half of the potentiality of human community.

2. Despite the emphasis of the international conferences, especially the World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in 1993, on the fact that women's rights are human rights and despite the repeated considerations of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action, we are witnessing the ugly phenomenon of violence against women in the world over, and there is not enough hope for the realization of women's rights.

3. Nowadays, despite the general preparation by the international community and the States, unfortunately, we are witnessing that there has been an increase in the number of cases of violence against women in different social and domestic forms. We are in fact concerned by the critical situation of women's rights in Afghanistan, occupied Palestine, South Lebanon and the genocide of innocent women and children in Algeria. There are also many other abuses of women's rights which are not seen by the States. The violence against women is a long-practised phenomenon in human societies which is not expected in today's progressed community. It is a social "illness" caused by the economic and cultural poverty. This problem should be given a high priority by the Commission on Human Rights, at a time when humanity is progressing to eliminate all the social, political and developmental inequalities. Violent abuses against women are a violation of justice and are mainly practised in the most sacred social body, i.e., "family".

4. It is certain that the women's issues cannot be resolved without a general revision of the basic values, moral principles and controlling mechanisms in "family" institution, family responsibility, publicity and media, and global and regional commitments.

5. It seems necessary to point out the relation between ignorance and violence. According to the studies conducted in this field, whenever the level of literacy decreases in the family, violence, especially domestic violence, increases against women. In Iran, domestic violence against women is also prevalent. It is in this context that the education is a necessary step in the families. For the realization of such education, the economic, social and cultural rights should be considered as important rights, especially the right to development becoming a reality which the States should try to achieve.

6. In the end, it is worth mentioning that the following effective measures are important in eradicating or decreasing the violence against women:

(a) Increase of general awareness and consciousness and promotion of moral principles;

(b) Empowering the women and giving them sufficient privileges for removing the inequalities;

(c) Strengthening the bodies of the civil society, especially women's non-governmental organizations;

(d) Giving more attention to gender in the enjoyment of social and occupational opportunities;

(e) Creation of supportive mechanisms and adoption of necessary laws;

(f) Increasing attention to the "family", and promotion of changes in the attitude to gender differences between boys and girls;

(g) Adoption of the necessary law for treatment and punishment of violence perpetrators;

(h) Elimination of the ugly phenomenon of violence in its various dimensions, especially sex abuse in media;

(i) Global dialogue and fundamental measures for the safety of people, especially the women and the children, in the world conflicts.